

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 COME-00 /097 W

-----032523 011402Z /45

P R 011215Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2830

INFO AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GABORONE 2394

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: RH, BC, PDEV

SUBJECT: SPEECH BY COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL

1. SUMMARY: IN OPENING THE GABORONE TRADE FAIR JULY 28, COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL RAMPHAL DELIVERED A KEYNOTE SPEECH WHICH SURPRISED AND INTERESTED HIS LISTENERS BY DEPARTING CONSIDERABLY FROM THE STRICT COMMERCIAL FARE ONE EXPECTS ON SUCH OCCASIONS, AND RECOMMENDING THE UK RESUME HER COLONIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO END THE RHODESIAN IMPASSE. END SUMMARY.

2. MUCH OF MR. RAMPHAL'S SPEECH DEALT WITH THE WAR IN RHODESIA AND HIS PROFERRED SOLUTION TO IT. HE REITERATED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND A NECESSARY ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE; AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE REGRETTED THAT THE PRESENT REGIME IN SALISBURY APPEARED TO BE BLOCKING THE "WAY FORWARD TO THE ALL PARTY TALKS".

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"BUT THE OBVIOUS WAY FORWARD IS NOT ALWAYS THE ONLY ONE", HE WENT ON TO POINT OUT, SAYING THAT MR. SMITH SHOULD "DO WHAT WAS ALWAYS DESIRABLE, NAMELY, DISMANTLE THE ILLEGAL REGIME - INCLUDING NOW THE INTERNAL ARRANGEMENT - AND INVITE HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UK TO RESUME AUTHORITY AND ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY AS THE COLONIAL POWER".

3. NOTING THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER "THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD THANK ME FOR WISHING THIS RESPONSIBILITY ON THEM", MR. RAMPHAL ADDRESSED A PERSONAL APPEAL TO IAN SMITH "FROM THE HAILING DISTANCE OF GABORONE", TO RECOGNIZE THE WISDOM OF THAT COURSE. "FOR MY OWN PART", HE ADDED, "I AM READY TO CLOSE THAT DISTANCE, TO GO TO SALISBURY, IF IT WOULD HELP TO ADVANCE THESE ENDS".

4. COMMENT: IN A NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS, WITH PERSONS WHO HEARD RAMPHAL'S SPEECH, CHARGE' GAINED IMPRESSION THAT MOST PEOPLE IN GOB AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS: (A) WELCOMED LIVELY SPEECH AS PALLIATIVE AGAINST NARCOLEPSY; (B) THOUGHT RAMPHAL'S SUGGESTION WAS INTERESTING AND POSITIVE BUT DEVINITELY IN THE NON-STARTER CATAGORY ZUE TO MITH'S WELL KNOWN AVERSION TO SUBMITTING TO UK COLONIAL AUTHORITY; AND (C) SAID THAT THIS SUGGESTION OF RAMPHAL'S HAS BEEN MADE BEFORE AND THAT IT IS AFTER ALL THE SORT OF IDEA ONE WOULD EXPECT FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL. NONETHELESS, UK HIGH COMMISSIONER TURNER (WHILE CITING OBVIOUS PITFALLS), HELD OPEN POSSIBILITY THAT RAMPHAL'S SPEECH MIGHT INITIATE A TRAIN OF UNFORESEEABLE EVENTS. TURNER TOLD ME JULY 29, THAT RAMPHAL HAD ASKED THAT SUBSTANCE OF HIS TRADE FAIR SPEECH BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SENT TO FONSEC DAVID OWEN IN ADVANCE AND THAT OWEN HAD TELEPHONED RAMPHAL, APPARENTLY TAKING NO EXCEPTION TO IT SINCE RAMPHAL GAVE SPEECH AS PLANNED. TURNER THOUGHT RAMPHAL WAS MAKING A SUPREME EFFORT TO "GET IN THE ACT".

5. EMBASSY POUCHING FULL TEXT OF RAMPHAL'S SPEECH TO DEPARTMENT.
NORLAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECRETARY GENERAL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GABORO02394
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780314-0813
Format: TEL
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808113/aaaadrem.tel
Line Count: 102
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 71346b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1581747
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPEECH BY COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL
TAGS: PDEV, RH, BC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/71346b59-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014